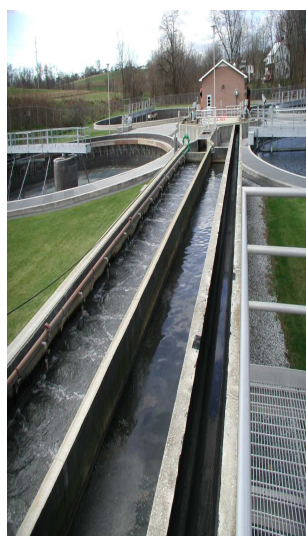




# Wastewater System Owner Roles and Responsibilities: A Best Practices Guide



Introduction	
<i>Purpose</i>	The main goal as a system owner is to protect water quality and public health. This Guide will help you better understand your roles and responsibilities in order to achieve this goal. There are key responsibilities that are critical to meeting your ultimate goal by complying with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements authorized by the Clean Water Act. It is also essential that municipal officials take the proper steps now to protect their wastewater treatment infrastructure for the immediate and long-term future.
<i>Target Audience</i>	This Guide is intended for owners of all Publicly Owned Treatment Work's (POTWs) or tribal systems discharging 5.0 MGD or less.

System Operation	
<i>Work to ensure that the system as a whole is functioning properly, efficiently, and in a financially responsible way.</i>	
General Responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually assess your system's technical, managerial, and financial capacity.</li> <li>Ensure that your entire wastewater system's infrastructure (pumps, pipes, tanks, collection system, etc.) is in good working order.</li> <li>Determine whether staffing levels are adequate.</li> <li>Work with the system operator to ensure that all staff training needs are met.</li> <li>Review your system's budget annually to assess whether your system is collecting enough revenue each year to cover costs of operating and maintaining the system and Capital Improvement Projects.</li> <li>Develop and maintain an Asset Management Plan.</li> <li>Benefit from the <u>free</u> TEAMS and CUPSS asset management software for small community systems (see links below for more information).</li> <li>Discuss treatment optimization with the system operator to comply with the NPDES permit.</li> <li>Determine your system's capital improvement requirements and priorities.</li> <li>Identify available sources of local, state, and federal funding with help from regulators, planning departments, and technical assistance providers.</li> </ul>	

Regulatory Compliance	
<i>Support your system in complying with all relevant regulations and protecting your customers' health and the environment.</i>	
General Responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure the system operator is aware of all relevant regulations, including sampling, reporting, and record keeping requirements.</li> <li>Make sure that all sampling, reporting, record keeping, and regulatory requirements are met.</li> <li>Ensure the system is in compliance with NPDES regulations; work with regulators as necessary.</li> <li>Communicate with state and local officials to increase your awareness of new tools that can help promote regulatory compliance and system security (e.g., guidance material, new treatment technologies, etc.).</li> </ul>	

## Communication

*Maintain a positive relationship with the community, regulators, and the system operator and keep them informed of your efforts to protect the environment and public health.*

### General Responsibilities

- Maintain open channels of communication with staff concerning budget issues, regulatory changes, or planned staffing changes.
- Inform customers of the need for infrastructure investments and rate changes to ensure the long-term integrity of the wastewater treatment plant and collection system.
- Meet regularly with the operator for updates on routine system inspections and scheduled maintenance.

## System Security

*Protect your system against natural disasters and vandalism.*

### General Responsibilities

- Invest in any necessary security upgrades.
- Inspect critical facilities and components to ensure authorized access when necessary.
- Maintain a list of written contacts for use in an emergency and make sure staff know whom to contact in the event of an emergency.
- Update the Emergency Response Plan and participate in exercise drills with the system operators and other staff.
- Attend security-related training if it is available.
- Develop procedures for handling new and terminated employees (e.g., collecting keys, changing locks and computer passwords).
- Communicate with state and local officials and your community to increase your awareness of new developments and tools.
- Be a part of a mutual aid group with other nearby POTWs.

### For additional information:

Visit the EPA Wastewater in Small Communities website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/index.htm>, or contact your state regulatory agency.

Also visit these areas of the EPA Office of Wastewater Management website:

[Tools for Small Communities](#)

[Municipalities and wastewater treatment plants: Fact sheets and outreach materials](#)

[NPDES- Municipalities and wastewater treatment plants: Overview](#)

[Water quality and technology based permitting](#)

And the Rural Community Assistance Partnership:

<http://www.rcap.org/>